The Chronicle and Index

OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

No. 72, Vol. vi.] BELFAST, DECEMBER 1st, 1886. [For Gratuitous Circulation.

THE Rev. J. C. Street begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscription in aid of the gratuitous publication of the *Chronicle and Index*:—

W. A. Adamson, Carrickfergus, £0 2 6

THE Treasurer of the Unitarian Society would be greatly facilitated in the discharge of his duties if the various members of the Society, in the country as well as in the town, would forward their subscriptions as early as possible. It is desirable that all accounts due by the Society should be paid before the end of the year, and every one sending in his subscription promptly aids in accomplishing this result. This word to our friends will, we trust, be sufficient.

THE Second Monthly Religious Service in connection with Rosemary Street Sunday School for the present season, was held on Sunday, November 7th. There was a good attendance of teachers and scholars, and several of the parents of the children were also present. Mr. D. Bulmer conducted the devotional part of the service, and the address was delivered by the Rev. J. C. Street. His subject was a continuation of his previous address on "Moses in Egypt." The children followed the progress of the story with great interest.

THE Children's Service at Hopeton Street Sunday School took place on Sunday afternoon, November 21st. The attendance was larger than the previous month. Mr. Bulmer gave out the hymns, and the rest of the service was conducted by Rev. J. C. Street, who spoke to the children on the Parable of the "Lost Sheep."

WE are glad to announce that the class for instructing girls in sewing at Hopeton Street has been recommenced this winter by Miss May, who has secured the co-operation of several other ladies to carry on the work throughout the winter. Miss May has already received contributions for materials, &c., from various friends, and would be glad to receive others.

PROFESSOR UPTON has been well advised in the publication of his admirable address, delivered at the opening of the 101st session of Manchester New College, London. The questions he discusses are, "Can Religion dispense with God?" and, "Will Culture outgrow Christianity?" With great carefulness the Professor treats these great themes; and while it is made evident that he is bold and radical in his method and aim, it is also manifest that there is a true spiritual conservatism which can hold fast to that which is good. Utterances like Mr. Upton's cannot be neglected in a seething, inquiring age like ours, and it is well that all students should listen respectfully to so thoughtful and fearless a teacher.

The following have been the subjects of the Rev. J. C. Street's discourses during the month of November:—

November 7th—*Morning*—"Come unto Me." *Evening*—The Covert from the Storm.

November 14th—*Morning*—"It is I; be not afraid." *Evening*—God's two Dwellings.

November 21st—*Morning*—"A New Commandment." *Evening*—Broken Shields and Divine Armour.

November 28th—*Morning*—"The Kingdom

of God is within you." *Evening*—Nothing but Leaves.

The various services have drawn together a considerable number of hearers who have listened to the discourses with unflagging interest.

The Mutual Improvement Society had a very pleasant and profitable time during the month of November.

On November 1st, Mr. Sloane read a very suggestive Paper on the question, "Has Theology evolved?" It was followed by a searching and lively discussion. On November 8th, Mr. John F. Mulligan delivered a Lecture, entitled, "A Ramble through Dromore." The Lecture was full of excellent matter, and gave evidence of careful research as well as of fine critical faculty, and it was relieved by apt stories and quotations; a synopsis of it appeared in the newspapers, and we understand the Lecture is likely to be published *in extenso*. On November 15th, a charming Paper, written by a Lady, entitled, "Wanderings in Rhineland and Vineland," was read by the Rev. J. C. Street. The story of the lady's travels was pleasantly and sparklingly told. On November 22nd, Mr. G. Fisher contributed a thoughtful Paper, entitled, "A Text from Tacitus," in which he traced the origin of the English people and pointed out their characteristics, and showed in a striking way the influence of race and descent upon the problem of the best government or a nation. On the 29th, Mr. A. Bowman lectured on "The Secret of good Government."

On the first Sunday morning in December (5th), the Annual Sermon to the young will be preached in the Church of the Second Congregation, by the Rev. J. C. Street. The children of Rosemary Street, and Hopeton Street Schools will be present. The Annual Collection for the Sunday School at Rosemary Street will take place, and it is hoped there will be a cheerful and substantial giving.

It is announced that the Rev. E. Birks, of Gloucester, has accepted a call to the congregation recently established at Douglas, Isle of Man. We hope his settlement in the Island will give an impetus to the cause of true religion there, and that he will be able to build up the congregation into a stable condition. He will find an earnest band of men ready to receive him and to work under his leadership, and we do not doubt that he will do his best for the people among whom his lot is to be cast. He has a fine field, and may be an apostle of light and leading in the island.

The Rev. John Page Hopps, of Leicester, and the Rev. H. W. Perris, of Hull, have resumed their services in public halls in those towns, and, as usual, are attracting large and interested audiences. They make the halls as cheerful as possible; have a bright musical service, and deliver brief and telling addresses, which are found very interesting to numbers of people who would never attend the regular services in our churches. These ministers are doing a good work, and there are many places in which their example might be profitably followed.

The following lines by the veteran poet, Mr. J. G. Whittier, were read at the inauguration of the Bartholdi statue. The ceremony formed a congenial subject, as will be seen, to the voice which helped so much to destroy slavery with its song:—

The land that, from the rule of kings,
In freeing us, itself made free,
Our Old World Sister, to us brings
Her sculptured dream of Liberty:

Unlike the shapes on Egypt's sands
Uplifted by the toil-worn slave,
On Freedom's soil with freemen's hands
We rear the symbol free hands gave.

O France, the beautiful, to thee
Once more a debt of love we owe;
In peace beneath thy fleur-de-lis,
We hail a later Rochambeau!

Rise, stately Symbol! holding forth
Thy light and hope to all who sit

In chains and darkness! Belt the earth
With watch fires from thy torch uplit!

Reveal the primal mandate still
Which Chaos heard and ceased to be,
Trace on mid air th' Eternal Will
In signs of fire: "Let man be free!"

Shine far, shine free, a guiding light
To Reason's ways and Virtue's aim.
A lightning flash the wretch to smite
Who shields his license with thy name!

The *Inquirer* says—"The Rev. Edward Everett Hall, D.D., one of the most distinguished Unitarian divines of America, pronounces the following the finest epigram ever made concerning our faith:—'Unitarianism stands for the humanity of God, and the divinity of man.'" It is from the pen of the Rev. E. C. L. Browne, minister of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, South Carolina, recently destroyed by the earthquake.

Another of the standard-bearers of our progressive faith, and one of the oldest of our ministers, has passed away from us since our last issue. The Rev. Francis M'Cammon, of Banbridge, has ceased from his labours and entered upon his rest. He has held an honoured position among the Romonstrant Churches for upwards of forty years, and his wise counsel and fatherly kindness will be greatly missed. He was a man of excellent parts, but his life lay in quiet regions, and he was most at home in pastoral work, and friendly helpfulness among his people. He was a man who never sought office, and was always content to be in the ranks as a soldier. Among his brethren of the ministry he was always courteous, friendly, and brotherly, and among his people he proved himself a wise and helpful pastor. He passed away from us in peace and honour, and his name will be held in respect and reverence by all who knew his solid qualities of heart and of head.

The Treasurer of the Unitarian Society begs to acknowledge receipt of the following subscriptions for the year 1886:—

T. L. Marshall,	Belfast,	.. £0	5	0
W. R. Stitt,	,,	.. 0	2	6
D. Bulmer,	,,	.. 0	5	0
Mrs. Bulmer,	,,	.. 0	5	0
J. Greenfield,	,,	.. 0	5	0
Jas. Moore,	,,	.. 0	10	0
H. Burden, M.D.,	,,	.. 0	10	0
W. W. Drummond,	,,	.. 0	5	0
T. E. Osborne,	,,	.. 0	2	6
N. A. Campbell,	,,	.. 0	2	6
F. E. Dale,	,,	.. 0	10	0
J. Worthington,	,,	.. 0	2	6
Miss Dobbin,	,,	.. 0	10	0
W. C. Dobbin,	,,	.. 0	10	0
Mrs. Barry,	,,	.. 0	2	6
J. W. Kinnear,	,,	.. 0	5	0
Jas. Kinnear,	,,	.. 0	2	6
J. L. Lowry,	,,	.. 0	2	6

N.B.—In last number J. Ritchie, junior's, subscription should have been 2/6 and not 2/- as reported.

SERMON BY REV. J. C. STREET.

Preached extemporaneously, and printed from the Reporter's Notes.

"And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?'
"And the multitude said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.'"—Matt. xxi. 10, 11.

Those are the concluding words of the lesson I read just now, and in those words the significance and splendour of the passage culminate. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, nearly two thousand years ago, were greatly excited. A crowd of people had been coming up the hill sides in tumultuous enthusiasm, making the air ring with their shouts, and the excitement had taken a somewhat remarkable form. The people had stripped themselves of their outer garments, and thrown them on the ground, and many of the more excitable of them had torn branches from the trees by the wayside and cast them also on the road. And in the midst of them, riding upon an ass, was a humble peasant, who had come from the northerly part of the country, and who was now making his entrance, for the first or second time, perhaps, into the city of Jerusalem. What could there be in him, or in the circumstances of the case, to call forth this enthusiasm, these manifestations, this excitement in Jerusalem? On the hill-top the

people heard the cries, they came clustering to the gates to know what this unwarranted noise should mean, and they saw, climbing up the steeps, this strange, motley, excited group; and they heard strange cries, the multitude saying, "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And the people of Jerusalem were full of wonderment. What new folly was this? What strange fresh manifestation among these enthusiastic Easterns? What could it mean? Was there some new village hero, whose name was on the lips of the people? Was there some new man claiming to be leader for the time? What was the frenzy that filled the minds of these people? But they waited, and as the cavalcade came nigher, they saw the object of the people's enthusiasm; they saw, in the centre of the group, this man on the ass, and naturally said, "What is all this about? Who is this?" And the answer they received was, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." The answer, for the time, seems to have been enough. They had heard something about Jesus; the fame of the village prophet had passed from the north, through Samaria, down to the south, and, naturally, to Jerusalem stories had come down from wandering pilgrims and devotees of this village prophet. They had heard from the lips of men and women, and even from the lips of children, about this Jesus; they had heard that he was preaching; that he had been baptising; that he had wandered about homeless, and that wherever he had gone he had stirred up strange wonder and enthusiasm. Therefore, in answer to their question, "Who is this?" it was said, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." And we, to-day, nearly two thousand years away from the scene described here in this narrative, are almost as anxious as the people of Jerusalem were to get an answer to the question, "Who is this?" There was great excuse for them, for it was a time when the village heroes and the village prophets were of some moment to a people whose prophets had been sons of peasants. And there is some reason for our anxiety and interest in this question, because for two thousand years, in what is called Christendom, men have been taking this name upon their lips; have been calling themselves his disciples; have tried to catch the accents of his words, and have invented theory after theory in answer to the question, "Who is this?" whose name we bear?

Now, I don't propose in what I have to say this morning to enter into any theological disquisition, and least of all do I intend to enter upon any of the moot questions of controversy as to the nature and status and position of Christ. What I *do* propose to do is this: to say something of the answer which *my* life and heart and experience and character have to give to the question, "Who is this, *to me*"? I do not think that I or you, or the profoundest theologians, or the most skilled doctors could give any accurate physical answer to the question who this man was. I will leave the creeds and the creed-makers and the systematised theories of the theologians quietly to rest where they are, and I will look at this man as I feel that I should have looked at him if I could have stood with those men of Jerusalem, having heard what they heard of this prophet of Nazareth—as I think I should have looked at him then. But to look at him, I must, at least, know something about him. The rumours that have reached the ears of these Jerusalem people are rumours that have come far more clearly to my ears than to theirs. Through fable and folly and enthusiasm and excitement the story had come to them. Only bits here and there had reached their ears, and they were full of excitement. *I* have more of the story before me than they had. Though so far off in point of space and time, I can yet see that personality more clearly than they could, and it may be even that I can catch the tone and accents of that voice more perfectly than they. All *then* was noise and excitement, and the story had been distilled to them through the agency of strange media. I can turn to these old records, and to the story written in the lives of unnumbered men and women—the saints of Christendom, and through the story, as told in the books and in the lives, I can read

my answer to the question, Who is this?—A villager from the mountain uplands; a peasant from the homes of the people; a school-boy in the Rabbi's school in Nazareth; a carpenter in his father's workshop, learning his trade as a carpenter; an attendant upon a village synagogue, listening to the old lessons from the grand old books—the same that we read to-day; a companion of peasants; a play-fellow with peasant boys. I see growing out of this strange mountain village, and from the conditions of peasant life, a personality wonderfully sweet, attractive and beautiful. A man like other men, with human blood in his veins; with human longings, and human aspirations, and human strivings; but with a nature rising even higher and higher, soaring into loftier regions, grasping new revelations of truth, coming closer and closer to God, until he could look as it were at God face to face, and say, "Father, I am thy Son." And this life, thus fashioned, for the major part of it lived in quiet, in isolation, among peasants, until there came into it some wonderful day the feeling, "I must not live to myself; these good gifts of God were not for me; this consecration of my nature was not that I might be saved; but all this has come to me that I might be God's revealer to the people, and I must go forth to teach." And from the village of Nazareth the village prophet comes forth, after one great scene there. It was the Sabbath day; the villagers were gathered together in the synagogue; they were worshipping as was their wont, and he among the number; the period of the service arrived when some portion should be read from the ancient Scriptures, and he rose from his seat in the synagogue and came up to the place of the reader, and, opening the little ark wherein was contained the rolls, he took out the roll, and opened it, and read, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me;" and then to the end of that wonderful passage which we can read to-day, in that same roll; to the end of that wonderful passage he read, and concluded by saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." And the eyes of all that were in the synagogue were fastened upon him. That was the day of his great consecration, in the presence of his own villagers, in the sanctuary where he so oft had worshipped, before the venerable Rabbi who usually conducted that service, in the presence of his mother and the family circle, he read those wondrous words, and said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." And he went forth with the mighty consecration of God in his soul, with the revelation of the Almighty gleaming through all that he was, he went forth to teach, to help, to bless, to raise, to consecrate, to save. Now, mark his course. Among the poor he went; his sympathies all were there. He was poor; he lived among the poor; he knew the needs of the poor, knew their longings and aspirations, and knew that he could minister to them. And to them he went; and women, when they heard the sound of his voice, brought their little babes out—I hardly know what they wanted; perhaps *they* did not know what they wanted; but there was such a tender pathos, such touching tones in his voice, that they went down to the very depths of their hearts, and what could they do but reach up their babes and let him bless them? And women, whose hearts were sore because they had sinned so greatly, came to him that they might touch the hem of his garment. And there is no spurning them aside, with high pretensions of virtue; no casting them out as though they were utterly unclean; but the look of sympathy, the searching tone of tenderness, and the women went away sanctified, and the light of God shone upon them, and the everlasting calm came into their hearts. And fishermen by the lakes, busy at their toil of the day, weary with their labour, got sound of that voice, and looked up in his face, and said, "What hast thou to say to us?" And somehow those fishermen became prophets, and they went forth with the message of God in their hearts. And the crowds grew, and the peasantry gathered together, and there was a strange fascination about him. There must have been something in his appeals that held people fast, by a spell they could not break. And then, behind the tone and the fascination of this wonderful

presence, there were words that were spoken. And the people could not enter into them at once, they were strange, and wonderful, and far-reaching; but the words seemed to fit with the tone and the presence, and men and women carried those words away in their hearts, and they became the scribes of God. No one with pencil or pen was there to take down those words, but there were hearts so ready to receive, and memories so ready to retain, that they were written in the very characters of those men and women. They thought of those words again and again—the carpenter at his bench, the sailor on the lake, the woman grinding her corn; they thought again and again of those words, and a new majestic strength seemed to come into them, and the people said to themselves, "Who is this? Who is this that has spoken these words to our hearts?" And the crowds multiplied, and the fame thereof spread from village to village, until there grew up a mighty enthusiasm that had emptied itself in Jerusalem, and the people there said, "Who is this?" Who is this, then, to *me*? So far off as I am; so apart in geography, culture, and civilization, what has he to do with me? Who is he to me? I am not unmindful of the fact that God has raised up other prophets, and teachers, and saviours, and saints. I am not unmindful of the fact that God has not left himself without witnesses all over the world. Men and women have poured forth their thanks to Almighty God for Buddha and the other great prophets of the world. I recognise their gratefulness; I take their words upon my lips, and feel that thankfulness in my heart, but, somehow, there is an invisible chord of sympathy and attraction that seems to draw me more closely to this Galilean teacher. Whether it is that the words he speaks are most akin to my religious feelings, I cannot tell; whether it is that he is the special agent that God raised up to speak to my special soul, I do not know; but this I know, that when most I need to feel the grasp of a brother's hand, to feel the touch of divine and human love, from him I hear words that will go to the very root of my feeling and desire. When most I wish to find a way to meet the cares and perplexities of my daily life, I feel myself like one of the crowd that gathered about the teaching of Jesus, and I push myself through the midst of that crowd, and bend down my ear to listen, and then there comes to me some message fresh from his heart and fresh from his life, that makes me say, "To *me* he is teacher, brother, helper, inspirer, friend; the one who, more than all others in the world, draws me closer to God, and makes me understand that He is a God of love." And I think if we could only drop our discordant theologies, and let the creeds and the creed-makers settle themselves; if we could only resolve that, so far as we are concerned, we will show allegiance to a true leader, so far as he leads us, I think we shall find that we too, like those in the olden times, can look through the crowds of humanity, and see this man of men, look through the prophets of the world, and see this prophet of prophets, this teacher of teachers, and thank God that Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee is also the prophet for us to-day, lifting us into sublimer heights, guiding us over the perplexities of our troubled way, and bringing us, as he himself was brought—bringing us as the children of God into our Father's home.

The Rev. T. Walters, in addressing the Unitarian body some time ago, said—

Brethren, with such a faith as ours, what manner of men ought we to be?—a faith not only whispered to us in the sanctuary of our own souls, but confirmed by the affirmations of saints and seers in every age; a faith to which the deepest currents of thought and feeling are combining into one grand consent; a faith for which the world is waiting to heal its diseases and save it from its sins; a faith which, in spite of superficial differences of opinion, is uniting all disciples of the spirit into one holy Catholic Church. Ours is a faith which, in its inmost essence, can never be outgrown, unless human nature itself can be outgrown; but we shall have to grow up into a comprehension of its power and beauty. However wise the world may become, however far man may progress in aspiration and endeavour, we shall never outgrow faith in a

divine Father, whose will is our highest law and whose revelation is made to the pure in heart; we shall never outgrow faith in the power of the soul, by the help of God, to conquer sin and enter upon a life of holiness and peace; we shall never outgrow faith in the final conversion of the world into a kingdom of righteousness, the realisation of the providential purpose; we shall never outgrow faith in the immortal destiny of man and the ultimate ingathering of all God's children into eternal blessedness. These are the *principia* of our religion, and of these Christianity is the largest illustration and the fullest embodiment. With these as our first principles, let us go on unto perfection, not only of personal conviction but also of evangelistic zeal, proclaiming, by spoken word and printed page, the eternal Gospel committed to our trust. And as this Gospel finds its way with regenerating power into every condition of domestic, social and political life, we shall feel that we have our place and function, as instruments of Providence, in hastening the fulfilment of the prophet's vision:—"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."

FROM "THE BATTLE OF GOD."

O blessed vision of old earth new-made;
The law divine unquestioned and obeyed;
Trod down for ever all things that degrade;
All life by art and poetry refined;
And God-love, man-love, blessing all mankind!

Was this mere idle dream,—as when, in car
Pendent from earth, in space's solar sea,
With our great globe baloon-wise over me,
I seemed to float once, voyaging afar
Past moon and planet, nebula and star?

Or was that better earth an orb that goes
In company with our earth, undescribed,
As in dead night a traveller walks and knows
Naught of the angel who upon that wide
And desolate heath moves, silent, by his side?

So strive, so reign, Almighty Lord of all!
So greatly win Thy planet-victory!
So gloriously what baffleth bring in thrall!
So strongly work, earth's lasting jubilee
With gladness and with singing to install!

And man may work with the great God! Yea, ours
This privilege—all others how beyond!—
To tend the great Man-root until it flowers;—
To scorn with godly laughter when despond
Tamely before a hoary hindrance cowers;—

Effectually the planet to subdue,
And break old savagehood in claw and tusk;—
That noble end to trust in and pursue
Which under Nature's half-expressive husk
Lies ever to the base concealed from view;—

To draw our fellows up, as with a cord
Of love, unto their high appointed place;
Till from our state barbaric and abhorred
We do arise unto a royal race,
Becoming blessed children of the Lord.

H. S. Sutton.

Professor Upton says—"There appear to be clear indications that the present vehement reaction against metaphysical and theological truth has seen its best, or, rather, its worst days. There are, doubtless, many who still believe, with Frederick Lange, that culture has finally relinquished all belief and interest in everything save phenomena and phenomenal ideals. For myself, I read the signs of the times very differently; and firmly believe that culture will yet live to see the day when that study of phenomena, physical and mental, to which evolutionists are enthusiastically devoted, will only serve, when better understood, to bring into clearer relief the existence of its own indispensable antithesis—that permanent Spiritual Reality in which alone Evolution can find its rational ground and its adequate explanation. It will be seen, in the words of Dr. Martineau, that 'without a permanent there can be no change; and the ideal which for ever grows must in its essence be secured upon the Real.' Some of our most thoughtful evolutionists are already conscious, with Professor Jevons, that the profoundest beliefs

and trusts of the human mind are wholly beyond the power of Evolution to explain or destroy. Whatever be our indebtedness to such men as Darwin and Spencer (and that indebtedness is assuredly not small), nothing that they have given us has, in the slightest degree, superseded or invalidated that revelation of the reality of God, Freedom, and Immortality which the spiritual insight of Jesus clearly discerned, and the philosophic genius of Kant emphatically endorsed. These glorious verities, though dimmed for a season by the passing cloud of overweening scientific pretension, will surely again emerge and shine into the minds and hearts of men with even more than their former illuminating and fertilising power; and Theology, now discrowned and discredited, will once more assume its rightful dignity in the curriculum of culture.

Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association.

FIFTEENTH SESSION, 1886-87.

The Committee have much pleasure in announcing the following

PROGRAMME UNTIL CHRISTMAS, 1886.

1886.

Dec. 6.—Music and Readings.

„ 13.—Lecture: "John Wycliffe." Rev. W. Reynolds, B.A.

„ 20.—Miscellaneous Original Compositions.

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THE OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

ARE

The intellectual and moral advancement of its members, and the furtherance of acquaintance and fellowship among them.

The Meetings are held on MONDAY EVENINGS at Eight o'clock, in the Rosemary Street Schools.

ADMISSION—To Lectures and Discussions—Members, Free; Non-Members, Sixpence each. To Papers, and Music and Readings—Free.

MEMBER'S SUBSCRIPTION—4s. per annum, which entitles to the use of the Library. Subscriptions for the Fifteenth Session are now due and should be paid to the Treasurer, DANIEL BULMER, 32 Queen Street, *as early as possible.*

The Library will be open at 1 p.m. on Sundays, and on every Monday Evening during the Session.

THE BELFAST UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

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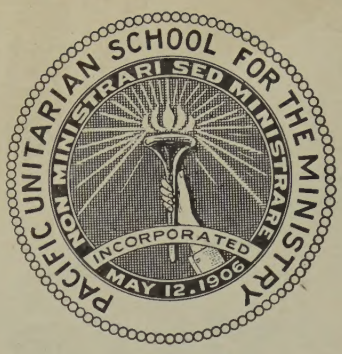
THE CHRONICLE AND INDEX.

1887.



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